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Title: Need to appoint a Committee to look into the problems being faced by the fishermen on the Western Coast (Konkan Region) of Maharashtra.

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE (RATNAGIRI): The fishermen on the Western Coast in Maharashtra are almost facing a difficult situation due to shrinkage in the quantity of fish production and deterioration in the quality of fish-catch. The year 2006-2007 has been particularly burdensome for them.

To take the case of Ratnagiri District as a case in point, fishing is the sole profession of livelihood for 104 villages; 82 situated on the sea coast and 22 along the inland back-waters. Around 15,000 families are housed in these villages.

The fishermen employ mechanized boats for fishing and their operations extend upto 100 K.M. for deep sea fishing.

May be, due to some natural phenomenon, there has been a sharp downfall in the fish production during the years 2006-2007 (69000 m. tons vis-a-vis 1,05,069 m. tons in 2005-2006). There has also been deterioration in the quality of fish-catch. This twin effect has taken a heavy toll on the earning of the fishermen. They need instant financial assistance.

Taken as a whole, in the Konkan region this problem is of vast magnitude.

In some ways, fishermen stand at par with the farmers. They have taken out 'Morchas' in sea to draw the attention of the Government to their plight.

I appeal to the Government to appoint a fact-finding Committee to report on the problems of fishermen on the Western coast of Maharashtra. The Committee should submit its report within a fixed time-frame and in the meantime the fishermen may be given a financial package at par with farmers to enable them to cope with the current situation.